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U exchange with Chile may draw controversy

By JANE BEDNAR

A University Senate council next week will hear testimony on proposed exchange agreements with three foreign schools, including one in Valdivia, Chile.

Only the proposed Chilean agreement—with the Universidad Austral de Chile—is expected to generate controversy, according to Anne Krueger, Council on International Education chairperson.

The other proposed agreements are with the University of Turku, Finland, and the University of Besancon, France.

The council will decide whether each of the agreements meets criteria spelled out in a policy statement recently adopted by the University Senate, and take that decision to the senate for approval.

Krueger said that on the basis of preliminary hearings held last spring she expects "outspoken" criticism of the proposed Chilean agreement.

The criticism will come from "various groups concerned about the Chilean regime and whatever they're doing to human rights," she said.

However, the policy statement contains no explicit human rights criterion, she said. The main criterion for approving the agreement is that all faculty involved have complete academic freedom.

"Insofar as people today have an emotional issue, Chile is it," Krueger said. Chile is often singled out from other nations accused of human rights violations, she said.

At last spring's hearings more people testified against the proposal than for it.

She expressed surprise that so few people called to reserve time to testify at the hearings. The deadline for reservations is Friday noon.

The Chilean agreement involves providing technical assistance to rural farmers in that country and bringing Chileans to the University to train them in agricultural techniques, Krueger said.

During the testimony the council also will listen for evidence of CIA involvement, according to Krueger.

Other American institutions such as the University of Michigan have been embarrassed by discoveries that the CIA has been funding their foreign research projects, she said.

Krueger said she is sure the faculty involved wouldn't have lied about CIA involvement had they been asked, but "nobody ever asked the question."

Those involved will be asked whether there is anything in the agreements they have not reported to the council.

"We've got to have them tell us that (there is no agreement with other organizations). If we don't ask the question, then we're guilty of covering something up," Krueger said.

Discussion of the French and Finnish agreements is expected to go "fairly easily," she said.

The French exchange program, involving language training, has been in existence for some time. However, the French government recently passed a law restricting enrollment at French universities to French students and students at foreign schools with which exchange agreements exist, she said. There was no need for an agreement before now.

The exchange with Finland would involve tracing migration from that country to the United States.

Under the new policy statement, no specific resources are committed by the University in an exchange agreement. Rather, the University unit involved is responsible for deciding which of their own resources they want to commit.

"Otherwise you could have chaos," Krueger said. "You could have somebody over in the Institute of Agriculture promising services of the Institute of Technology."

The criteria section of the policy statement also specifies there must be "a legitimate area of common academic and scholarly concern" between the University and the exchange institution.